

NEWS

VOTE,  
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The Federal Government’s voting Web site, *www.fvap.gov*, has links to states and other agencies that provide extensive information for voters.”

Individual candidates and television also offer prospective voters an opportunity to formulate an educated opinion.

“Also, the candidates themselves may even provide Web sites that constituents may visit when conducting personal research,” continued Ladson. “Finally, there is always the option of watching the candidates debate on national television.”

Despite easily accessible information and the simplicity of actually filling out a ballot, fewer and fewer Americans are going to the polls.

In 1960, 63 percent of the American electorate voted. By 1996, that number had dropped to under 40 percent. Voters must remember that the winning president-elect may have an enormous impact on their future and the future of their children.

There are many examples of both single votes that have had a significant historical impact:

- One vote made Oliver Cromwell Lord Protector of the Commonwealth and gave him control of England.
- One vote caused Charles I to be executed.
- One vote kept Aaron Burr from becoming president.
- One vote made Texas part of the United States.
- One vote changed France from a monarchy to a republic.
- One vote elected Rutherford B. Hayes to presidency, and the man in the Electoral College who cast the vote was an Indiana representative also

elected by one vote.

- One vote made Adolph Hitler head of the Nazi Party.
- One vote maintained the Selective Service System only 12 weeks before Pearl Harbor.
- One vote per precinct would have elected Richard Nixon rather than John Kennedy to the presidency in 1960.

Single votes can have an even greater impact within a state’s local election.

Do you complain about the policies of your children’s school? If so, ask yourself, did I vote for the members of our school board? Do I even know the members of the school board? Change starts at a grass roots level, and all change starts by electing people to implement change, whether it is a mayor or a president.

Remember, too, when you are unhappy with the condition of your town’s roads or your state’s tax rate, being involved, voting for and knowing your elected officials will enable you to voice your complaints to the appropriate representatives. You voted for them and they work for you.

Some other reasons cited in the CNN poll for why more people do not vote are because the polls are too crowded, voters cannot get there on time, or they do not have transportation.

Ladson explained that these issues should not be a problem for military members and their families who are interested in voting.

“A Marine interested in voting should contact his unit’s Voting Assistance Officer and begin the process of either registering to vote in the next election or requesting an absentee ballot,” explained Ladson.

WMA provides sweet treats for vets

CPL. JENNIFER BROFER  
STAFF WRITER

During Christmas time, families gather and gifts are exchanged under the luminescence of a brightly-lit Christmas tree and near the warmth of a crackling fire. However, there are some people who do not have family close enough to share these experiences with during this special time of the year – or any time at all.

In an effort to bring a bit of Christmas spirit to them, members of the Phyllis Alexander Chapter of the Women Marines Association took up a candy collection from members of AmVets Post 70 on Ribaut Road. They put together decorative candy boxes and wrapped gifts for veterans in the nursing wing of the Ralph Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston, which were presented to them in a visit Saturday.

The gifts and candy were not only a welcomed treat for the veterans, but also a rewarding experience for the women as well.

“I think it’s great ... I just like doing things like this because I don’t want anybody in a hospital, or anywhere like that, forgotten,” said Brenda Moore, president of the Phyllis Alexander Chapter. “I think it’s hard for everybody at the holidays because they’re away from their friends, their family, and they just can’t come and visit whenever they want. I think they feel forgot-

ten sometimes.”

Moore and the other volunteers who took time out of their day to put together the gifts proved that the veterans were not forgotten – at least not to them.

“It’s a small gesture, but we hope it’s a heart-warming gesture that they’ll appreciate,” said Moore, as she loaded boxes with sugar-free candy varieties for the diabetic patients. “I don’t think we can ever do enough for the veterans.”

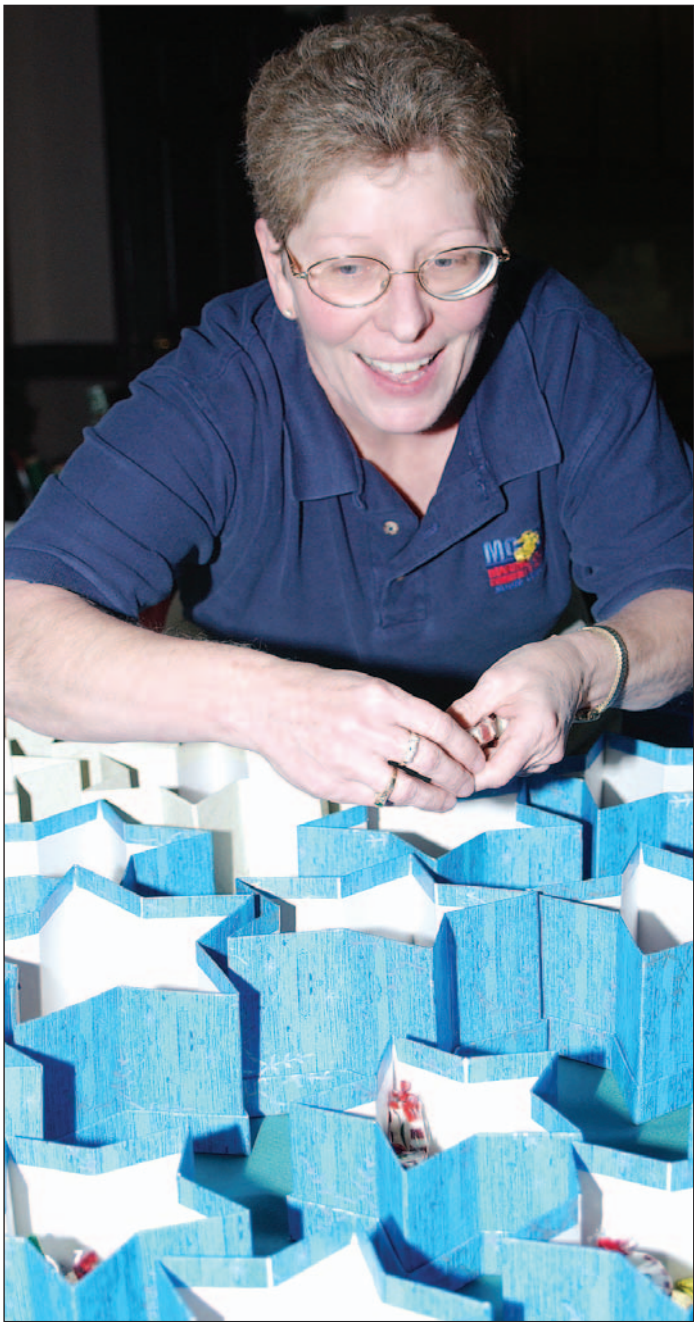
Another volunteer put forth a lot of her own money and time, buying festive ceramic cottages for each of the veterans and wrapping each gift.

“We just all wanted them to have some kind of decoration,” said Kathie Born, the volunteer who bought and

wrapped the gifts. “I’m sure some of their families decorated their rooms like the Hilton, but some of them don’t have families at all. I figured this is my way to repay them for what they have done for my life and my family.”

Members of the Phyllis Alexander Chapter try to visit the veterans at the hospital at least once a month, to bring them a few smiles, share laughs and brighten their day. According to Priest, this particular visit was especially meaningful for the women, as well as the veterans.

“We had a great time, and they loved their gifts – it really worked out well,” said Priest. “I saw more smiles Saturday than I’ve ever seen any other time I’ve been there.”



Cpl. Jennifer Brofer  
**Brenda Moore, president of the Phyllis Alexander Chapter of the Women Marines Association, stocks each decorative box with candy Dec. 4, for the veterans in the nursing wing of the Ralph Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston. The candy boxes, along with a wrapped gift, were presented to each of the veterans Saturday.**